

Summary

Community Workshop

Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront Site
October 25, 2007

Residents of the Chequamegon Bay area gathered in Ashland, Wisconsin on October 25, 2007 to identify the characteristics of clean-up options for the Ashland/NSP Lakefront site that would make a remedy(s) most acceptable to the community. "Community acceptability" is one of nine criteria Superfund managers are required to consider when choosing clean-up methods.¹ Early in the investigation process, area residents and others asked U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Natural Resources to provide such input prior to the ranking of potential clean-up options for this site.² The federal Superfund program encourages project staff to seek such early community input about clean-up remedies and future use of sites before a feasibility study is conducted.³

The community workshop followed a public meeting one week prior where EPA and DNR project managers presented the results of the remedial investigation, the study that described the degree and extent of contamination. A state health specialist explained health risks posed by site contaminants. The city administrator summarized the goals and recommendations of the city's waterfront development plan. The city's plan was developed as part of a comprehensive plan that included extensive public involvement of both city and area residents. The project team also described the purpose and process for the community workshop to give people an opportunity to prepare. This information was also explained in an informational mailer prepared by the Agencies and in a front page article in Ashland's *Daily Press*.

Notices of the community workshop were sent to the Agencies' site mailing list and in several notices published in the Ashland *Daily Press* and the *Evergreen Press*. Meeting announcements were posted in local stores, at Northland College and in public buildings. Such local organizations as the League of Women Voters and the Chamber of Commerce also included notices of the meeting in their newsletters or e-mail alerts.

Workshop Format

The community workshop followed the format recommended in the "Visioning" section of EPA's Superfund *Community Involvement Toolkit*⁴ and in other guides cited in the *Toolkit*.⁵

Superfund project managers gave a brief overview of the types of methods typically used for cleaning up sediment, soil and ground water containing manufactured gas plant wastes. Then they explained how the nine Superfund criteria are used to evaluate potential remedies for a site.

The workshop's facilitator, a University of Wisconsin-Extension water resources educator, asked community members to identify the outcomes or characteristics of a cleanup remedy that would make it most acceptable to them. Participants were asked to avoid identifying characteristics associated with the other eight criteria already defined in Superfund guidance (e.g., reduces risk). Participants divided into small groups at separate tables, each with a facilitator and an easel. Each participant was provided a marker and a set of 4"x6" Post-It Notes. They each took five minutes to write down the characteristics or outcomes they would like to see addressed, one per note sheet. They then described their recommendations, one at a time in round-robin fashion, and handed their note sheet to the facilitator to post on the easel for the group to see. Research shows that people think most creatively while working in silence, but in the presence of others. The method also provides an opportunity for all present to express their ideas.⁶ The facilitators asked the group to identify whether their suggestions might be organized around common themes.

After all participants submitted and explained their recommendations to their small groups, the facilitators brought all the notes to the front of the room, and transferred them to one large 5'x15' paper sheet on the wall. The meeting facilitator organized the notes into groups sharing a common theme. For example, the suggestions "return site to its original beauty – most natural looking" and "preserve aesthetics of waterfront/park area" were grouped under the theme "beauty and aesthetics." In all, 105 suggested outcomes or characteristics were organized around 15 themes. The themes were grouped into three categories: 1) characteristics during implementation of the remedy, 2) outcomes of the clean-up and 3) characteristics of the overall process for clean-up.

The last step at the meeting was the assignment of weights to the recommended characteristics. Each participant was provided five self-sticking colored dots. They were asked to place their dots on the recommendations they felt were most important. They could distribute their five dots as they wished. They could put from one to five dots on any suggested characteristic or on the overall theme for a group of characteristics. The table at the back of this summary lists the recommended characteristics and the number of dots assigned to each. The brainstorming technique used for this meeting is effective at reflecting a wide range of community concerns, but the assignment of dots is not an effective method to assign formal weights to particular characteristics. Instead, it simply gave the participants a general sense of the strength of their interest in each characteristic they recommended.

EPA and DNR intend to work with NSP Wisconsin, the company potentially responsible for the cleanup, to identify ways to incorporate the results of the workshop into the feasibility study, currently under development by NSP Wisconsin. This report will identify potential options and evaluate the effects of each remedy relative to eight of the nine Superfund criteria, including the "community acceptance" criterion.

Next Steps

Once the feasibility study is complete and recommended cleanup options developed, EPA will hold a formal public comments period and hearing for residents to weigh in on proposed cleanup options.

Table: Participants' point scores for recommended characteristics of remedies they would find most acceptable.

Table 1: Participants' point scores for recommended characteristics of remedies they would find most acceptable.			
Theme	Points	Points	
During Clean-up Concerns			
16	8	<u>Time</u>	
1	3	Be quick	
2	3	Fastest speed of clean-up	
3	1	The clean-up process is completed as quickly as possible	
4	1	Most efficient timeline	
5		Identify the timeframe for clean-up	
6		Set and keep to schedule	
7		Fastest speed of clean-up -- natural processes too slow	
8		Restoration sooner rather than later	
11	1	<u>Disruption</u>	
9	4	Marina operations and boat storage not affected during clean-up	
10	3	Be as unintrusive as possible during clean-up to Ashland and lake	
11	2	Least disruption to residents	
12	1	Expedite short-term objectives to put area back into development	
13		Stage clean-up for access	
14		Maintain local access for recreational activities	
15		Tourism protected	
16		Maintain tourism during clean-up	
17		Best focus on clean-up process -- not in a vacuum	
18		Protect tourism: "orange suits" negative impact	
19		Not disturbing waterfront activity	
20		No effect on wildlife during clean-up	
21		Least environmental impact during clean-up	
22		During construction maintain use of swimming beach and waterfront trail	
7		<u>Sustainability</u>	
23	3	Minimize waste generated by clean-up method	
24	3	Re-use/recycle coal tar as fuel product	
25	1	Use most local services and most local materials for clean-up	
26		Most sustainable clean-up re: location, etc	
<u>Odors</u>			
27		Most reduce vapors below perception	
28		Minimize particulate and odor issues	
13		<u>Cost & Who Pays</u>	
29	10	Identify the total cost of the project	
30	2	Local taxes least affected by clean-up	
31	1	Least impact of Xcel Energy customer	
32		Where does payment come from?	
33		Cost	
After Clean-up Outcomes			
33	5	<u>Maximum Future Use Opportunities</u>	
34	18	(Most) compliance with waterfront plan, i.e., most future use opportunities	
35	1	(Most) consistent with waterfront development plan	
36	6	Total clean-up for most future use for tourism, business development & future generations	
37	1	Most options for future use	
38	1	Allow long-term public use	
39	1	Property can be used by the public (most) safely	
40		Most waterfront plan opportunities	

Theme			
Points	Points		
41			At a minimum - consistent with waterfront plan
42			Be able to use the area
43			Option most flexible to future use
44			The land can be used in some way by the public
45			Make area as useful as possible for the greatest variety of future uses
46			Re-use
47			End use theme and remedy selection
48			Feasible re-use of wastewater treatment plant
49			Re-use treatment plant for marina-related activities
50			Get rid of sewer plant
13	4		<u>Recreational Use</u>
51	3		Make site most available for future use: marina expansion, etc.
52	1		Maintain existing space for boat storage and parking
53	1		Best improve RV campground
54	4		Be able to swim there
55			Be able to fish and swim in the area
56			Re-use the bay area for fishing, wading, boating
57			Provides the most deep, useable space
58			Most maintains navigation
59			Best maintains beach
60			Best personal recreation
15	3		<u>Beauty & Aesthetics</u>
61	9		Return site to its original beauty -- most natural looking
62	1		Natural looking shoreline after clean-up
63	1		A "show piece" development location facility -- the most desirable location
64	1		Created ravine as a gateway to the lake
65			Attractive gathering place
66			Most aesthetically pleasing
67			Re-use of the "Kreher Park" area as a natural area
68			Preserve aesthetics of the waterfront/park area
8	5		<u>Shoreline Location</u>
69	2		No further encroaching on Lake Superior
70	1		Restore quality and keep same footprint
71			Removal of contamination without removing lakefront
7	1		<u>Fish & Natural Habitat</u>
72	3		Lake ecosystem protected
73	1		Optimum maintenance of healthy fishery
74	1		Fish (smelt) safe to eat
75	1		(Least) affect waters flowing to sacred rice beds
76			Most healthy fishery and natural habitat
77			Local fisheries (most) restored
78			Most improve coastal habitat and aesthetics
6	6		<u>Groundwater/Artesian Wells</u>
79			Artesian wells remain unaffected -- clean aquifers
80			Use of artesian wells restored
81			Use of artesian wells for clean, safe drinking water
82			Artesians and aquifer restored
83			(Most) clean-up of Copper Falls aquifer
84			(Most) clean-up of free product from aquifer
			<u>Toxic effects</u>
85			Most protect human health & environment

Theme		
Points	Points	
Clean-up Process		
41		<u>Least Risk of Re-visiting Clean-up</u>
86	18	Do it right the first time
87	12	Most permanent remedy
88	3	Most complete clean-up
89	3	Clean-up needs to be complete, not just covered up
90	2	Most prevent continued/future degradation
91	1	(Most) Long-term solution
92	1	Reputation of Ashland restored, i.e., no more Superfund
93	1	Stop erosion of pollutants by whatever means necessary
94		Best account for natural disturbance processes, e.g., erosion
95		Least likely to create contaminant problem elsewhere
8	4	<u>Education & Community Involvement</u>
96	1	Site interpretation for awareness building
97	1	Prevent this from happening again: education, incentives
98	1	Education, public awareness and involvement
99	1	Public relations initiative to keep project moving in a positive direction
100		Good explanation for tourists of what is going on and why
101		Community involvement during and after implementation
2		Remedies
102	2	Dry-dredged
103		Complete contaminant removal
104		Least preferable: capping and leaving in place
105		Cap it and go home

References

- ¹ U. S. Code of Federal Regulations. 40 CFR §300.430(e)(9). The nine criteria are: 1) protection of public health and the environment, 2) compliance with state, federal & local laws, 3) reduction of toxicity, mobility or volume of contaminants, 4) long-term effectiveness or permanence, 5) short-term effectiveness or time required for implementation, 6) implementability or ease of accomplishing the remedy, 7) financial cost, 8) acceptability to state government and 9) community acceptability.
- ² Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2005. Community involvement plan: Ashland/NSP Lakefront Site (EPA ID# WISFN0507952). Publication No. RR-726. Madison, Wisconsin. pp. 12-13.
- ³ U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. 2001. Early and meaningful community involvement. OSWER Directive 9230.0-99. Washington, D.C.
- ⁴ EPA, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. 2002. Superfund community involvement toolkit. Publication No. EPA 540-K-01-004. Washington, D.C.
- ⁵ EPA, Office of Sustainable Ecosystems and Communities. 1997. Community-based environmental protection: a resource book for protecting ecosystems and communities. Publication No. EPA 230-B-96-003. Washington, D.C. See also: National Association for City and County Health Officials. 2000. A step-by-step process for visioning. Available at http://mapp.naccho.org/visioning/visioning_approach_to_visioning.asp; accessed 18 Dec 2007.
- ⁶ Delbecq, A.L., Van de Ven, A.H. and Gustufson, D.A. 1975. Group techniques for program planning: a guide to the nominal group technique and delphi processes. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.